FLORIDA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

Working Together as a Team

Capstone Design Teaming and Communication

Teamwork Basics

- Every member should fulfill a role
- Roles can overlap, and individuals may hold more than one
- Accountability and collaboration are key
- Be aware of what is and is NOT appropriate

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Team Contract

- Create a written contract with all members
- Include commitments, meeting rules, communication practices, and conflict guidelines
- All team members must sign and date by hand
- Upload final contract as PDF

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Example Team Agreement (source griffintate.com)

SAMPLE TEAM CONTRACT

Project Name: Project Leader:

A. Commitments: (pg. 44)

As a project team we will:

1. Only agree to do work that we are qualified and capable of doing.
2. Be honest and realistic in planning and reporting project scope, schedule, staffing and cost.
3. Operate in a proactive manner, anticipating potential problems and working to prevent them before they happen.
4. Promptly notify our customer(s) and sponsor of any change that could affect them.
5. Keep other team members informed.
6. Keep proprietary information about our customers in strict confidence.
7. Focus on what is best for the project as a whole.
8. See the project through to completion.

B. Team Meeting Ground Rules: Participation (pg. 45)

We will:

1. Keep issues that arise in meetings in confidence within the team unless otherwise indicated.
2. Be honest and open during meetings.
3. Encourage a diversity of opinions on all topics.
4. Give everyone the opportunity for equal participation.
5. Be open to new approaches and listen to new ideas.
6. Avoid placing blame when things go wrong. Instead, we will discuss the process and explore how it can be improved.

C. Team Meeting Ground Rules: Communication (pg. 45)

We will:

1. Seek first to understand, and then to be understood.
2. Be clear and to the point.
3. Practice active, effective listening skills.
4. Keep discussions on track.
5. Use visual means such as drawings, charts, and tables to facilitate discussion.

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D. Team Meeting Ground Rules: Problem Solving

We will:

1. Encourage everyone to participate.
2. Encourage all ideas (no criticism), since new concepts come from outside of our normal perceptions.
3. Build on each other's ideas.
4. Use team tools when appropriate to facilitate problem solving.
5. Whenever possible, use date to assist in problem solving.
6. Remember that solving problems is a creative process—new ideas and new understandings often result.

E. Team Meeting Ground Rules: Decision Making

We will:

1. Make decisions based on data whenever feasible.
2. Seek to find the needed information or data.
3. Discuss criteria (cost, time, impact, etc.) for making a decision before choosing an option.
4. Encourage and explore different interpretations of data.
5. Get input from the entire team before a decision is made.
6. Discuss concerns with other team members during the team meetings or privately rather than with non-team members in inappropriate ways.
7. Ask all team members if they can support a decision before the decision is made.

F. Team Meeting Ground Rules: Handling Conflict

We will:

1. Regard conflict as normal and as an opportunity for growth.
2. Seek to understand the interests and desires of each party involved before arriving at answers or solutions.
3. Choose an appropriate time and place to discuss and explore the conflict.
4. Listen openly to other points of view.
5. Repeat back to the other person what we understand and ask if it is correct.
6. Acknowledge valid points that the other person has made.
7. State our points of view and our interests in a non-judgmental and non-attacking manner.
8. Seek to find some common ground for agreement.

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G. Meeting Guidelines: (pg. 47)

1. Meetings will be held every ____ days/weeks/months.
2. Meetings will be called by _____.
3. Agendas will be issued every ____ days/weeks in advance by _____.
4. Meetings will be facilitated by _____.
5. Evaluations of meetings will be conducted every ____ meeting.
6. The scribe will issue minutes within ____ days of the meeting.

H. Meeting Procedures: (pg. 47)

1. Meetings will begin and end on time.
2. Team members will come to the meetings prepared.
3. Agenda items for the next meeting will be discussed at the end of each meeting.
4. A Parking Lot will be used to capture 'off-the-subject' ideas and concerns.
5. Unresolved issues will be added to the Issues list.
6. If a team member can not attend a meeting, he/she will send a representative with authority to make decisions.
7. Meeting tasks will be rotated among members.

Signatures: (Team members)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Defining Roles in the Contract

- Assign key roles: leader, recorder, researcher, designer, builder, planner
- Members may hold multiple roles
- Roles may overlap across people
- Identify communication lead responsible for sponsor updates

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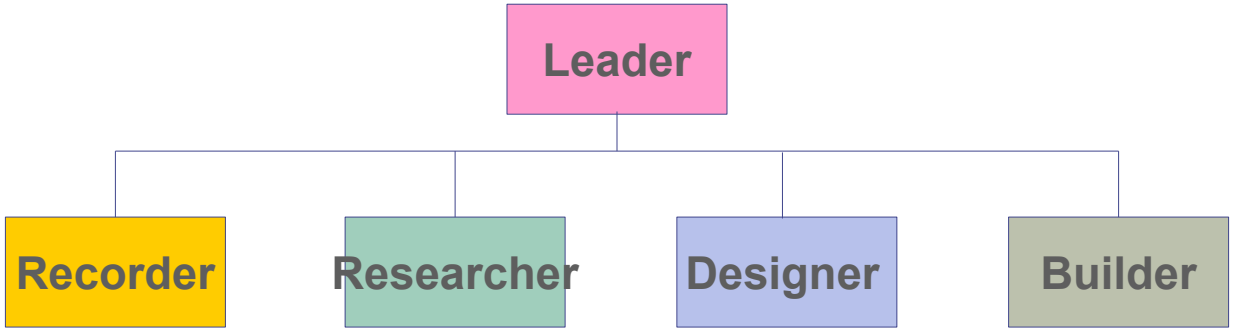
Team Structures
(a.k.a. Organizational Charts)

Example: Traditional Team Structure



Implies strong leader who directs team.

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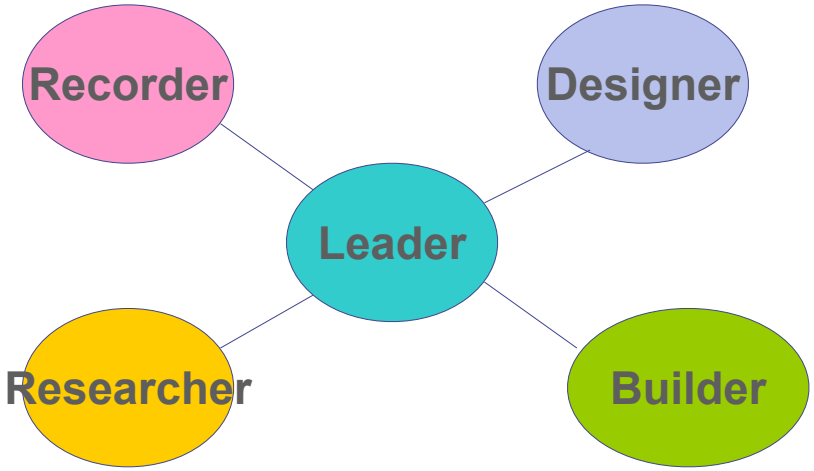
Team Structures
(a.k.a. Organizational Charts)

Example: Flat, Participative, Spoke Structure



Implies accountability / participation of leader.
Team inter-dependence.

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Decision-Making in Teams

- Decisions allocate resources such as time, effort, and skills
- Use structured approaches and data where possible
- Consider alternatives, risks, and constraints (time, money, expertise)
- Incorporate diverse perspectives, avoid groupthink

First Email to Sponsor

- Introduce team name, project, and each member (with majors)
- Express excitement to collaborate
- Identify communication lead as contact person
- Request first meeting (suggest times or ask for availability)
- Keep message professional, clear, and concise

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Assignment 1 – Team Contract

- Draft a complete team contract
- All members must sign and date by hand
- Upload scanned PDF of the signed contract
- Due: 10/8/25

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Assignment 2 – Sponsor Email

- Draft an introductory email to sponsor
- Include team introduction, project, majors, enthusiasm, contact person, and meeting request
- Faculty mentor must approve draft before sending
- Send email today after approval

Faculty mentor will spot check these in class for approval to send. Make sure to get mentor approval before sending.

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